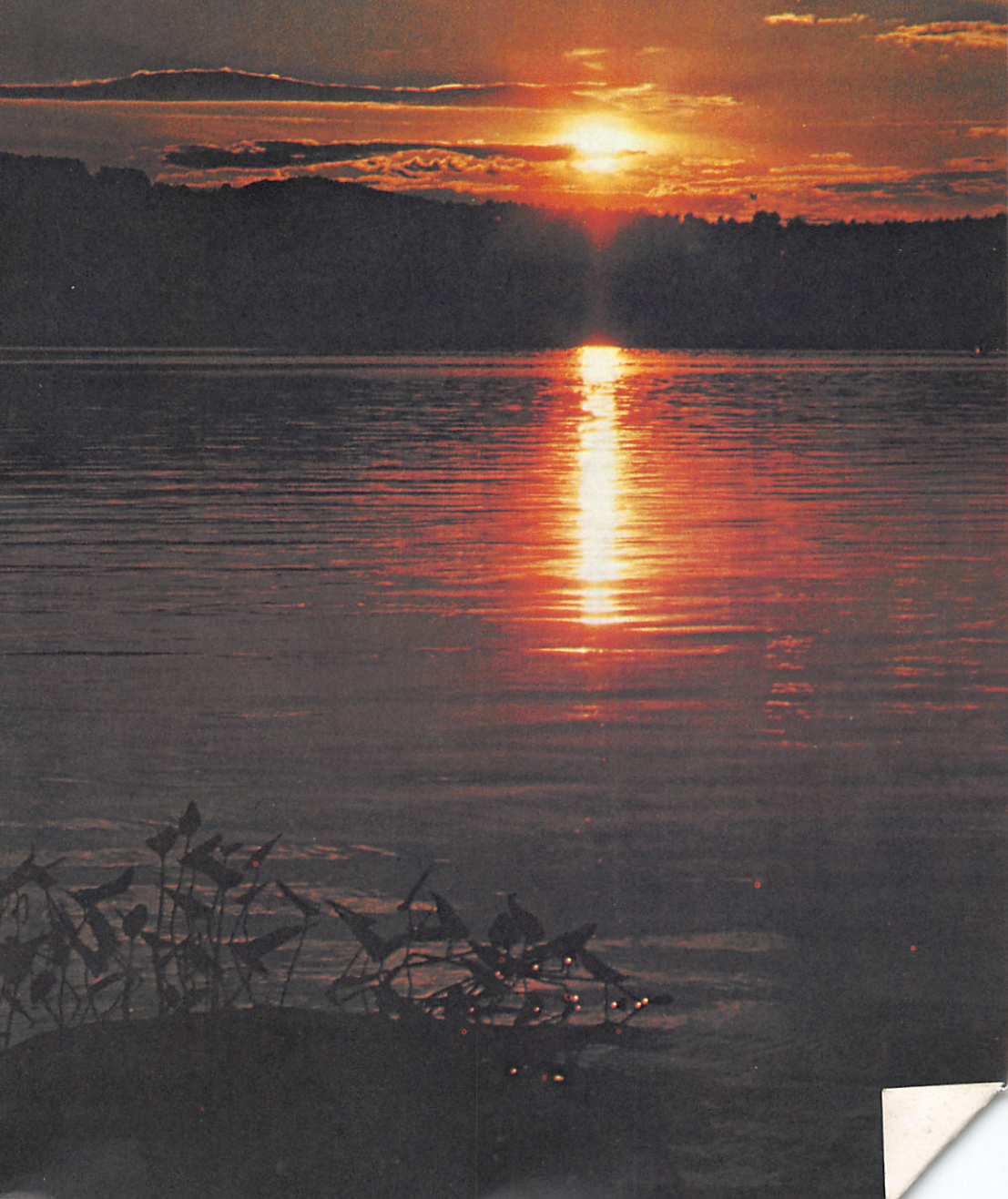


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# BitterSweet

NOVEMBER 1977 *The Magazine of Maine's Hill & Lakes Region* VOL. I, NO. 1



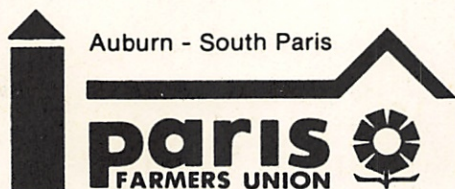


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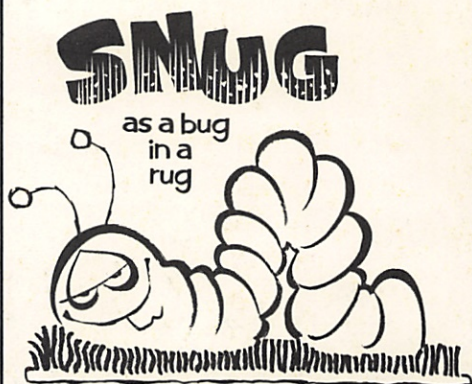


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# BitterSweet

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*Editor*

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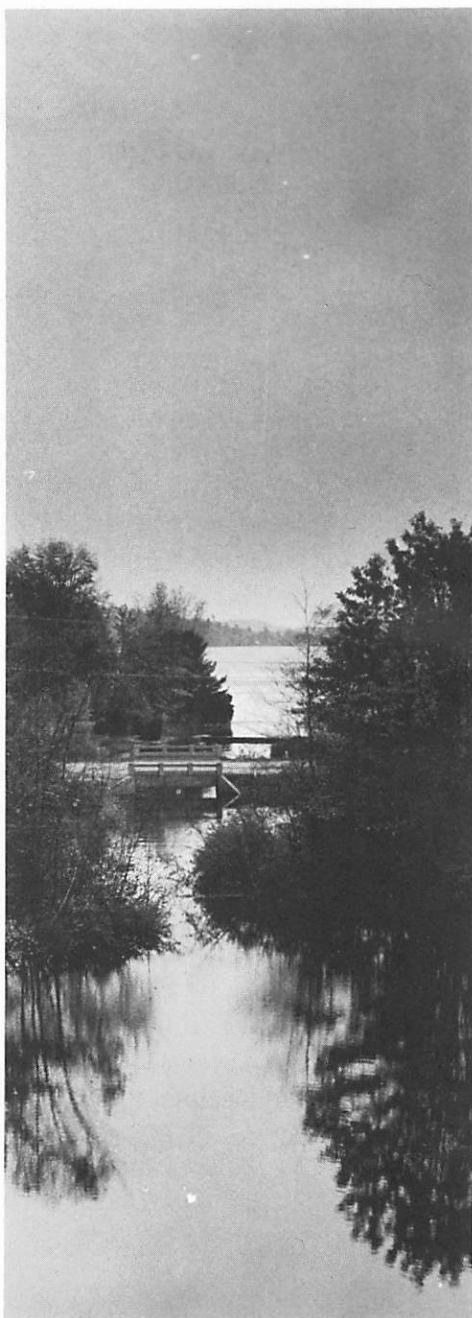
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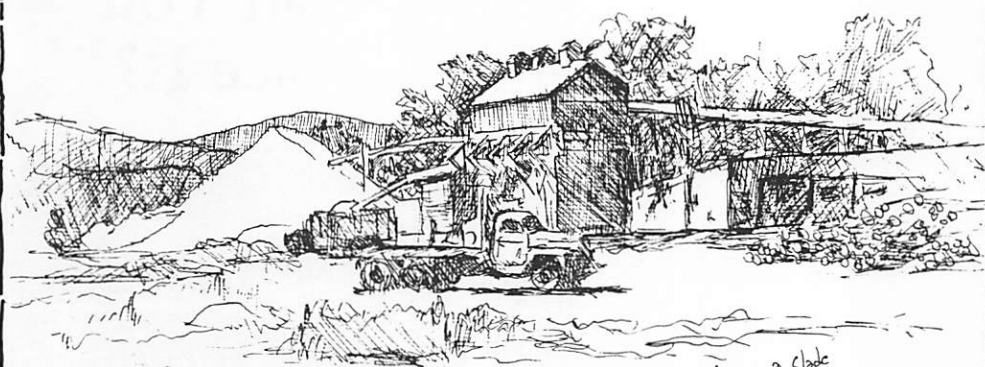
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## Can You Place It?







Mill & Bethel

D. Slade

# Crossroads

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## CREDITS

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 Cover Photo: Sunset at Norway Lake (Pennesseewassee) by D. Gilpatrick

View from Oxford's Allen Hill







## Sweet Notes:

"Everybody's a story," observed a local man-about-town, matter-of-factly, when told of **BitterSweet**'s beginnings. We agree. And we recognize that the area has been attracting a healthy share of story material of late.

It's no news that things are on the move. New faces and beginning business are as frequent as fall's firm, ripened apples. It is from this fertile ground that **BitterSweet** springs. As the name **BitterSweet** implies, transitional times are never entirely rosy. Like all parts of Maine, the Oxford Hills and Lake Region must tackle some tough trade-offs involving preservation and progress before striking that delicate balance between a cherished past and a thriving future.

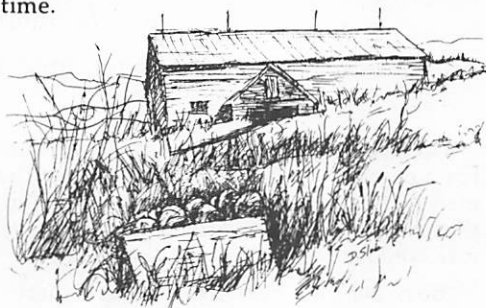
Emergence of the magazine is, itself, a sign of the times. We believe the area is ready to relish and support a monthly publication with a local look. And we believe the magazine can be a lively addition to local lifestyle.

**BitterSweet** will be casting an easy-going, down-to-earth eye around the region. Inland Maine is not all hardworking farmers and their white-aproned women folk living out serene days in picture postcard-like villages. It is also shop owners and mill workers, carpenters and teachers, craftsmen and young lawyers. Some settled in here long ago. Others arrived only recently, drawn to the area as a kind of last outpost in which to carve out an existence free from unsavory urban trappings.

I have a good friend who, with her husband, is trying to make a go of it farming fulltime. She bemoans the fact that there is

no suitable way for her to meet regularly with local long-time farmers to share experiences and learn their ways. **BitterSweet** is, in part, for her. Its contents will hopefully be an exchange between the area's newcomers, eager for perspectives on the past, and those native folks whose families have helped shape that heritage.

"Folk tales" will feature bits of information on local neighbors-of-note submitted by readers. "Recollections," a regular monthly feature, will offer observations from some of those septuagenarians — and near-septuagenarians — who have been here about the longest. "Making It" will chronicle modern-day attempts to establish somewhat self-sufficient existences, by those working as craftspeople, farmers and in other small businesses. The less-romantic, but no less real aspects of local life — from shopping centers to shoe shops — will receive equal time.



Each issue will include material — fiction and non-fiction, short stories and poems — written by local contributors. An eventually extensive entertainment and coming-events section will, we hope, establish **BitterSweet** as an essential reference for heading around the area. We are, obviously, hoping for your support as the magazine develops in the months ahead. We hope to have **BitterSweet** become more insightful, entertaining and literate with each issue, as its pages begin to reflect a bit of what it is which is attracting so many newcomers to our midst — and has made so many people stay put in these parts all along.

We would welcome your reactions and suggestions for the magazine. We urge you to contribute material. **BitterSweet** is above all else *your* magazine. Together, we look forward to times that are more pleasure than pain — more sweet than bitter.

*Sandy Wilhem*

# **Barbershopping in Oxford Hills: Striking a Responsive Chord**

by Sandy Wilhelm

*"You'll be hoarse tomorrow, but forget your sorrow  
while we bust a chord tonight."*

**Chord Busters March** by William Wyaat

The song reaches a rollicking conclusion. For a moment, the room is still. A few of the men exchange brief, knowing glances. Then, the church basement erupts in a series of war whoops and thunderous applause.

"Boy, did you hear it? We were there." shouts lead singer Art Gouin.

The two dozen barbershoppers have gotten what they came for — the ringing chord. It may happen only once or twice a night, but that spine-tingling blend unique to barbershop singing has been sufficient to keep them coming back to the basement of the Norway Congregational Church night after night for the past year. While past attempts to organize local chapters of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA) in nearby Bridgton and Lewiston-Auburn have fallen flat, within the Norway-South Paris Chapter, things are booming.

The Hillsmen Chorus boasts a membership of 40. It has spawned one polished, first-rate quartet, The Hebron Experience, comprised of four staff members from Hebron Academy. Three less structured, more informal quartets get together sporadically. The chapter has

presented two local concerts, the first of which, held last spring, drew more than 600 people. "Sing-outs" have been staged at many local nursing homes and for various community organizations. A late summer lawn sale sponsored to raise funds to purchase spiffy blazers for members netted a healthy \$500.

"I guess you could say we're really rolling," grins Gouin, a University of Maine Extension Agent who was the driving force behind getting the group going a year ago.

Part men's social club, part service organization, part professional choir, the barbershop gatherings appear to attract participants for about as many reasons as there are men ready to strike a chord. For some, it's a good night out, a tension reliever. For others, it's a creative outlet, a source of tremendous satisfaction. Still others find the weekly get-togethers a great escape.

"There's no misery when you're singing a song," says Gouin.

Anyone willing to pay the \$38 annual dues is eligible to join and the organization prides itself on its appeal to men from all economic and social strata, from mill workers to bank presidents. It is not necessary to have a





### Limbering up for a Lion's Club sing-out

trained singing voice to join up. Singing ability is secondary to desire. All that is required at the outset is a commitment to the society's aim to promote both vocal and social harmony through song and service, and an aptitude for hard work.

#### A Warm Welcome

Sixty-nine year old Joe Rodriguez of Waterford had never even heard a barbershop group perform prior to answering a membership ad placed by Gouin in a local newspaper.

"I went to my first meeting out of curiosity and because I thought it would be fun," recalls the former New York City municipal employee who retired here three years ago.

"I got a warm welcome when I walked in and I still do," he says,

Rodriguez commutes 36 miles, regardless of the weather, in order to attend practice in Norway. He says the dedication and spirit of camaraderie among members is so great that even if the time should come when he is no longer "good enough" to sing with the chorus, he would not want to sever all ties.

"There's more involved than singing," says Rodriguez. "We're also a service group which does a lot of community good through

appearances at nursing homes and hospitals."

Each of the 750 local barbershop chapters is also linked to an international service project which contributes funds each year to support speech therapy work at the Institute of Logopedics in Wichita, Kansas.

As a result of the time spent with the local chapter, which he juggles with church and town planning board involvement, Rodriguez says he's made new golfing and bowling buddies. Often, the men practice their barbershop parts while playing.

"We're a bunch of guys with somewhat matched voices, a common interest and a dedication to a cause," summarizes Gouin. "It all adds up to a heck of a good time."

But, service and social overtones, although important to the total picture, take a back seat to the group's true purpose — the making of fine sound. The fellowship can be found elsewhere. But not the music.

Barbershop singing is a unique, four-part, pure vocal harmony rendered without instrumental accompaniment. Its harmony is dictated and measured by the true "diatonic" musical scale rather than the so-called "tempered" scale, where note intervals

...cont. page 8

are not harmonically accurate, but are used to match the mechanical limitations of keyboard and valve instruments. The complex, distinctive barbershop chord progression is called a "circle of fifths," referring to note positioning within the chord.

The technique is highly technical and far more difficult to execute than most people realize. The melody is usually sung by the lead. The tenor part, like a high alto, is customarily sung above the lead. The bass sings an octave lower than the lead and supports the melody. The baritone provides those in-between notes which produce the distinctive barbershop blends of such familiar favorites as "Five Foot Two" and "Wild Irish Rose."



### The Ringing Chord

When it all comes together under designed circumstances within an arrangement, over and under tones are created through the physics of sound. Nobody sings them. They just happen. The ringing chords are the final pay-off for a job well done, accomplished by reaching exact resonance within the harmony, the right blend of volume and tone, correct pitch and vowel sound.

"We always have a lot of fun singing at the ordinary level," explains long-time barbershopper Bill Detert of Norway. "But, the ringing chord is what basically keeps us coming back. It's the spine-tingler. The super thing."

"It's the thrill of hearing the chord ring true that keeps you going," says Stan Andrews of Bryant Pond, a retired undertaker and barbershopper of long standing.

Before the days of the local chapter, Detert, who belonged to an Illinois chapter which placed fourth in the nation in the mid-

'50s; and Andrews, who put together a Bryant Pond quartet in the mid-'60s, used to travel all the way to Portland each week in search of the elusive chord. When the commute got to be too much, Andrews quit the Portland group and concentrated on membership in the Clearwater, Florida chapter which he joined while wintering down south. Both he and Detert were charter members of the Norway-South Paris Chapter.

### An Opiate

Barbershop is theorized to have had its origins in the hearts of men for whom singing the seventh chord was an opiate. Like jazz and the Negro spiritual, it is one of the truly American forms of self-expression, spawned in the 1840s and developed during the early beginnings of the entertainment and recording industry. It started with minstrel shows and traveling family concerts and reached its peak during Vaudeville and burlesque. Because barbershop was not a type of music but rather a method of adapting already-popular songs which lent themselves easily to four-part harmony, it was an instant hit with the public.

The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America sprung up as barbershop began to wane in the 1930s. The organization's original 26 members were responding to a tongue-in-cheek appeal from a Tulsa, Oklahoma businessman who wrote:

"In this age of dictators and government control of everything, about the only privilege guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, not in some way supervised or directed, is the art of Barbershop Quartet Singing."

The high-falutin' name was a parody of the multi-initialed agencies springing up under Roosevelt's New Deal.

From its somewhat flippant beginnings, the organization has grown to include 39,000 members in more than 700 chapters in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain and West Germany, among whose ranks have sung such luminaries as Arthur Godfrey, Harry Truman, Bing Crosby and Meredith Willson (composer and author of "Music Man," which featured the Buffalo Bill's quartet,

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# Marriage

Fiction by John Meader

"That takes care of the first one," Jane said. For the first time in three days except for abed, they were alone, standing on the porch after midnight.

"Where'd I put that beer?" The question came out with a yawn, "What you need's a beer." He put an arm around her back and grasped her side, "Fatten you up."

"For the slaughter, are you kidding."

"Just like leading lambs to slaughter," he concurred. The phrase was reflex; spoken thoughtlessly — merely something said after too much talk.

"Quit your yawning and let's go to bed. Some damn fool will show up for coffee at half past seven."

"Susie'll be up by then. Let's go for a stroll." He pulled her along, down the step and onto the grass.

"You're crazy," she said, but she didn't resist.

The warm air was moist and smelled of new hay in the barn, of the manure and rotted green chop in the yard where the milking Holstein fed. Moonlight brightened upon metal roofs of barns, sheds and outbuildings — located without totally defining the more complicated shapes of machinery — tractors, the forage chopper, the baler and mower-conditioner.

"You're moonstruck," she added.

"Hold up a moment. Let me check the bulk tank."

"Now, isn't this some stroll." She sat up on the bed of the hay trailer and looked off toward the orchards on the next hill. He returned after she'd stopped looking, and she said, "Polly was very pretty. Is very pretty." She'd said it so often.

"She is."

"I feel like hitting somebody." She looped a roundhouse right at him and he enveloped her, chuckling, plucked her up and swung her, then set her down again.



"I'm so tired. She's too pretty. She's nothing but pretty. And that's as far as it goes."

They'd talked about it; she couldn't shake it loose. Bill — they'd called him Billy up until a year ago — was quiet, serious, hard-working. He had a natural sense for animals; he'd taken over tending the sick ones. Polly made her own clothes, she cooked passably, but she never offered to raise a hand when everyone else was out straight. It wasn't something, apparently, that she understood. She had a blank face sometimes when everyone else was talking.

"Come on, let's ride up onto the top of the ridge."

"George, you've drunk too much champagne."

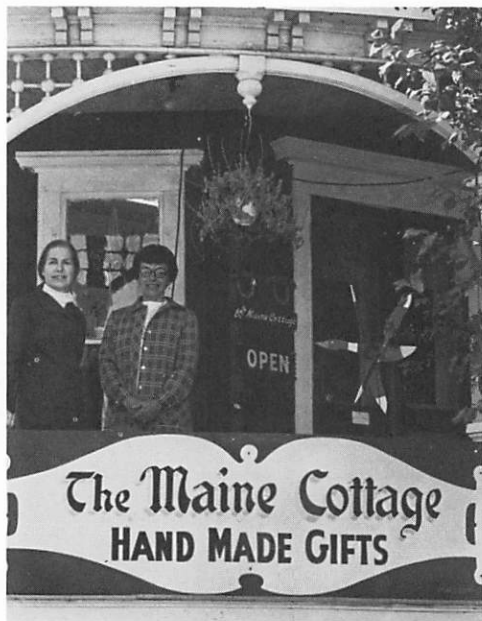
"Sober as a circuit judge."

Tire ruts ran up the gradual incline between fenced-in pasture where the heifers grazed and a three-acre stand of field corn now nearly knee high. He rode Billy's roan stallion, she rode the Morgan that had been hers and now belonged to their older daughter, Susan. The saddles creaked. The horses seemed subdued by the half-light.

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# Maine Cottage At The Crossroads

by Sandy Wilhelm



**Managers Jean Whitney & Thelma Merrill: Sets of long underwear and a vow to keep the Cottage open.**

Can a public, non-profit market for fine handmade crafts find self-sufficiency, free from the aid of government funds and private institutional grants? Founders thought it was feasible when they set up the Maine Cottage in South Paris five years ago. But, now they're not so sure.

The shop's forced march from South Paris to its present Norway location last spring dealt a harsh blow to an already "shoestring" sales volume, cutting shop income by almost 40%. The spectre of heating the rambling old Gingerbread House which now serves as shop headquarters at the top of Norway's Main Street threatens to deliver the knock-out punch.

"Every once in awhile you have to stop and ask yourselves, 'what are we here for?'," former University of Maine Extension Agent Ruth DeCoteau told a group of Cottage producers in Norway recently.

"We are hoping the answers we come up with will keep us going," said Mrs. DeCoteau, one of the Cottage's original prime movers. "But, we're just not sure at this point."

Originally conceived as a way of supplying local craftspeople with significant incomes by marketing their wares, the Cottage never came through on its initial promise. The idea of training scores of unemployed people in various cottage industries and then having them serve as shop suppliers sounded great on paper. But it never came off. People, once schooled, simply weren't interested in cashing in on their newly acquired skills.

Although none of the shop's 200 producers makes an annual living wage through Cottage sales, the business has, nevertheless, been an economic boon to the area, generating a total \$160,360 in sales during its five years of operation — a figure which Mrs. DeCoteau is fast to point out is "not bad for a shoestring operation."

Only 11 of the 71 people answering a recent questionnaire circulated by Cottage Manager Jean Whitney said they needed money gained through the Cottage in order to live. But, 54 additional producers said that although the funds were not essential, they "sure helped." Most, according to Mrs. Whitney, make about \$500 a year. A few have topped the \$2,000 mark.

But, the Cottage means more than money and nobody knows that better than Mrs. Whitney, the outfit's only fulltime employee.

"Take away the Maine Cottage and you take away a major source of satisfaction for lots of the producers, about half of whom are senior citizens," she says.

"Most of these people have been at the point where they either had to sell their things or give up making them. They'd already given the items away to everyone they knew. We're allowing them to continue their hobby. And we're giving them the satisfaction of knowing there are people around who like what they do enough to buy it."

### A Needed Incentive

Barbara Brown of Bethel has been taking her homemade mittens, throws and notepaper to the Maine Cottage ever since it opened.

"I've been making things all my life," says the retired nurse. "But, I had reached my saturation point when I heard about the Maine Cottage."

Her fringed wool throws and ponchos, made from material obtained at Oxford's Robinson Manufacturing plant, have proven "very popular out of state," she says. Her notepaper — bits of dried flowers and grasses handsomely arranged beneath clear contact paper — has been another big seller.

"I make what sells best and I like having a little money of my own from the proceeds," she says. "I need that incentive to go on making things."

### Products of Retirement

The stunning stained glass lamps and ornaments on sale at the Maine Cottage are products of Harry Glueck's retirement. After 43 years as a track supervisor with the Long Island Railroad, Glueck, who has always admired stained glass work, wanted a glass locomotive as a memento. When the only one he could find had a price tag of \$25, he decided to invest \$14.95 in a kit and learn the technique himself. That was two years ago. Several locomotives and a few Tiffany-style lamps later, Glueck placed his wares on sale at the Maine Cottage.

"I like selling at the Maine Cottage because

I can do my work as it's needed," says Glueck, seated at his tidy workbench in the basement of his Oxford retirement home. "I'm just not interested in mass production. That kind of thing has been my life's work and I wanted to get away from it. I like the change of pace. No push. No pressure."

Glueck, whose background is in engineering and who has gone through life labeled "unartistic," says he surprised himself with his polished stained glass products.

"When I see what can come out of a dirty sheet of pattern paper, I'm truly amazed," he admits.

Patience is the key to fine stained glass craftsmanship and Glueck has plenty of it. Working mostly in cathedral glass, which is less expensive than its antique counterpart, he carefully cuts each pattern piece using a regular kitchen glass cutter, scores the cut once and then taps the glass apart. A Tiffany-style lamp will have a dozen or more components, each of which must be cut exactly right in order to avoid glaring imperfections in the finished product.

Once the glass pieces are cut and placed on a flat work table, they are slowly tacked and fitted into strips of either H-shaped or U-shaped leading, of either 3/16 or 1/4 inch widths. The lead joints between the glass pieces are sanded and soldered with a soldering gun of wattage high enough to get the job done but not so high as to burn through the material. Glueck says he usually applies a flux of oleic acid to help the solder adhere and works with either a 25 watt or 75 watt gun.

In the case of the Tiffany-style lamps, the sheet of glass and lead material is bent into its circular lamp shape once the soldering is completed, and then the electrical fixtures are added. All work is washed thoroughly before it is finally finished.

"There's no room for mistakes here," smiles Glueck, who says once he "gets into it," he seldom sacrifices much glass anymore. But, he has cartons full of discarded pieces of glass, piled in the corner of his shop — the remains of earlier learning stages. The ability to turn out first-rate work, he says, rests in a willingness to recognize that if a mistake is made, an item must be discarded and begun again.

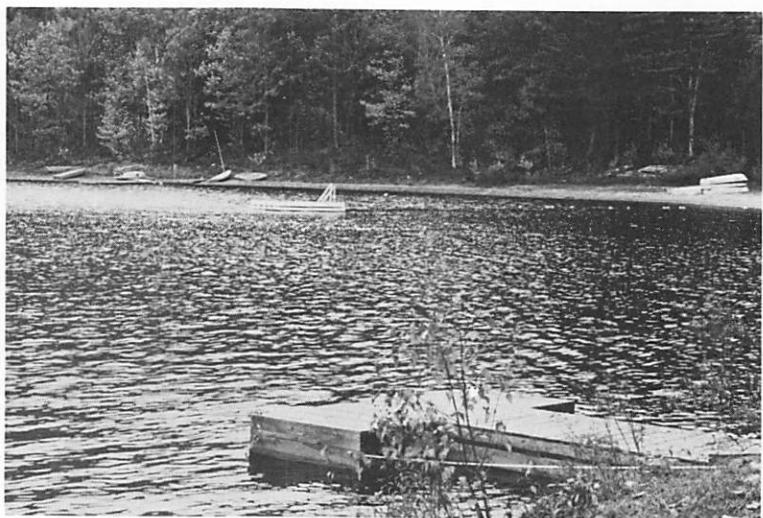
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# Buttoning Up For Winter

(l. to r.) John Webber admires the hefty wood supply stacked at The Highlander Pub in Bridgton. Augie Schau beds down his bees in Buckfield. Evelyn Merrill fills feeders in Bethel. Charles Stevens sorts winter wood in Bridgton. Fern Boudreau patches the roof on his Bethel country store. Bob and Mabel Lucas practice their storm window-hanging ritual.

While beached boats signal summer's end at the base of Bridgton's Pleasant Mountain, shrubs in Harrison take shelter beneath their snow-protective shields and an anonymous "everyman" indulges in a symbolic buttoning-up gesture.





See Sweet Finds  
page 24

# Goings On

## SPORTS

**FOOTBALL:** Oxford Hills High School vs. Morse High School, at Morse, Nov. 5, 1:30 p.m.

**SOCCER:** Bridgton Academy vs. Hebron Academy, at Bridgton, Nov. 2, 2:30 p.m.

Bridgton Academy vs. Kents Hill, at Bridgton, Nov. 3, 3:00 p.m.

## MOVIES

**MAGIC LANTERN:** Rt. 302, Bridgton; "Regular Shows": Nov. 2 - 8, *One On One*; Nov. 9 - 11, *Rocky*; Nov. 12 - 15, *Herbie Goes To Monte Carlo* (with Sat. & Sun. Matinees); Nov. 16 - 29, *Star Wars* (also seen at special shows and matinees). "Special Shows": Nov. 3 - 5, Frank Zappa's *200 Motels*; Nov. 10 - 12, The Rolling Stones in *Gimme Shelter*; Nov. 24 - 26, Monty Python's *Jabberwocky*. "Matinees": Nov. 5 - 6, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*; Nov. 25, *Life and Times of Grizzly Adams*; Nov. 26 & 27, *Sword of Ali Baba*. For information on show times and charges, tel. 647-5033.

## DINING OUT

**FRIED CLAM DINNER:** sponsored by American Legion, Jackson-Silver Post #68 at American Legion Hall, Bethel, 12 noon Nov. 11

**HUNTERS' BREAKFAST:** sponsored by Bethel Fire Department, Nov. 5 & Nov. 12 5 a.m. - 11 a.m.

**HUNTERS' BREAKFAST:** sponsored by Stone-Smart Post #82, Sat., Nov. 12, 4 - 7 a.m., American Legion Hall, Norway.

**ANNUAL CHICKEN PIE SUPPER & SALE:** West Paris Universalist Church, Thurs., Nov. 17 at The Goodwill Hall. Fair begins at 2 p.m., Supper at 5:30 p.m.

## THEATRE

**CELEBRATION MIME THEATRE** presents *Garbo and Jillian* in an evening of comedy, mime, magic, acrobatics, drama and dance, Weds., Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m., William Bingham Auditorium, Gould Academy, Bethel. Admission Free.

## DANCE

**FITNESS THROUGH DANCE** class presented by Judith Berg at Buckfield High School Gymnasium, Mondays, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. through December 12. Registration Fee \$8.

## ART GALLERIES

**TREAT GALLERY:** Bates College, Lewiston. Wood Engravings by Leo Meissner, Nov. 3 - Dec. 7.

**HUPPER GALLERY:** Hebron Academy, Hebron. Metal, wood, stone and plastic sculpture by Colby College Associate Professor of Art, Harriett Matthews, through Nov. 11.

## SALES/FAIRS

**SKI SALE:** sponsored by Bridgton Lions, Town Hall, Bridgton, Nov. 4, 4 - 9 p.m., Nov. 5, 9 - 4 p.m.

**CHRISTMAS FAIR:** sponsored by Buckfield Community Improvement Corporation, Nov. 19 at Community Center Building.

**CRAFT FAIR:** sponsored by Vocational Region 11, Nov. 12, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., at Oxford Hills High School gym.

**MINI CRAFT FAIR & BREAD SALE:** sponsored by Norway Congregational Church, Nov. 4, 4 - 7 p.m.

...cont. page 20



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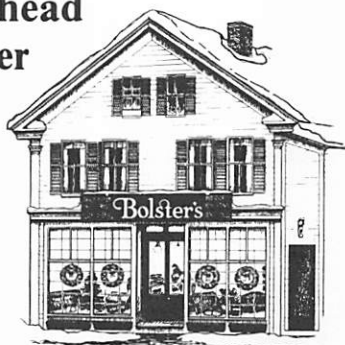
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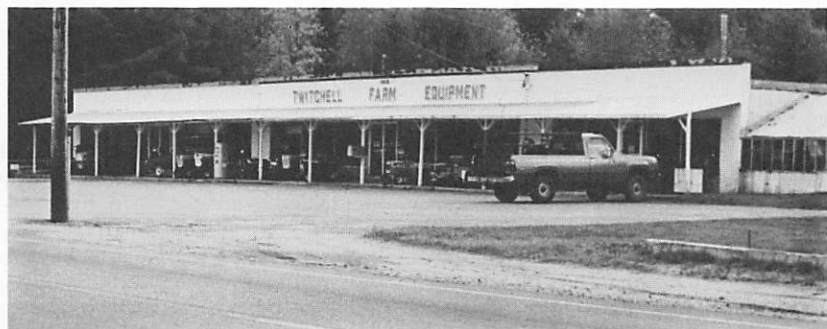
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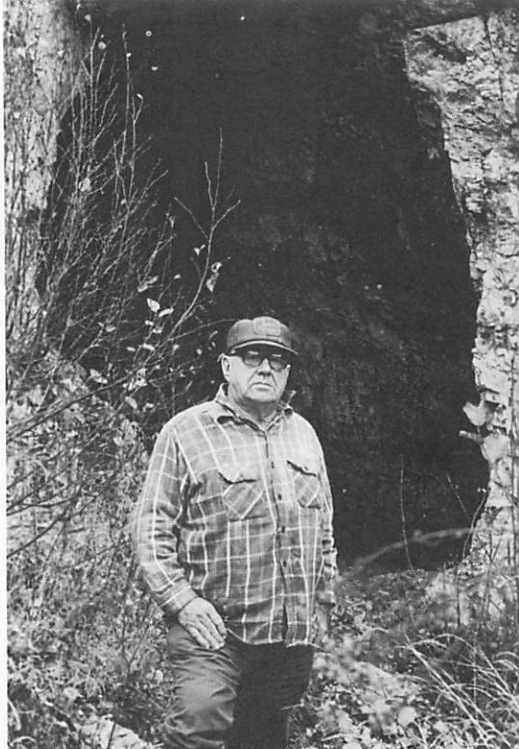
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*"Maine Yankee Trading Center"*

Albert Kimball outside the giant feldspar cave at the Bumpus mine . . .



# Recollections

Albert Kimball was brandishing a freshly shot partridge in one hand and a dog-eared entry from Jane Perham Stevens' gems and mineral book in the other when we rendezvoused outside the Bumpus Mine in Albany. Speaking in a rapid-fire, staccato fashion which made him sound more like a race track announcer than the cattleman, woodsman and sometimes-miner that he is, the 69-year old Kimball took me on a whirlwind tour of the renowned mine and talked about the days when the place prospered as a commercial enterprise — serving up 21,000 tons of rock between 1927 and 1936; offering another 3,000 tons of material from 1945 - 1948, including 1,000 tons of some of the finest feldspar ever found in Oxford County, along with 25 tons of mica and 15 tons of beryl; and later adding impressive amounts of rose quartz to its list of credits.

The feldspar, processed at the West Paris mill, found its way into the ceramics

industry where it was used to provide translucency on fine china. Mica by-products of the feldspar operations were stockpiled for use in insulation and electrical products. Beryl was — and still is — valued both for its beauty and as a source of beryllium ore. Rose quartz has always been a much-sought-after decorative stone.

Although a viable local industry since its beginnings more than 150 years ago, mining in Oxford County has always been a bit erratic, and the Bumpus Mining operation is no exception. The history of the many quarries carved out of the surrounding hills shows a random rotation between commercial enterprise and recreational outlet. For awhile, the mines are kept active supplying minerals, mostly feldspar and mica, to meet a commercial demand. Then, when the demand drops off, the sites are taken over by the ranks of gem collectors who avidly search the commercial remains for valuable discards. Ownership of the

mines and location of mining operations changes with the cycle.

At the moment, commercial mining is slow so the scale is tipped in favor of the 10,000 rock hounds who file into the county each year to sift through some of the county's most varied — and abundant — minerals. Kimball, who operates a lively tourist business at the Bumpus Mine, charging visitors \$2 a day for exploration rights, says the place is busier now than in its commercial heyday, thanks to the rock hounds!

"Back in 1927, I heard Harry Bumpus was going to open up a mine and I been here off and on ever since. But, I done everything, see. I was a cattle dealer and, good God, as I say, in the fall I was a huntin' guide for deer huntin'.

"It was a big operation then and been one ever since. But, it's more busy now than in 1927. Oh, my God, in the summer it's terrible busy. More people comin' in here just to get a sample of this and that and everything. Get something to put in their collections. See everybody — these rock hounds — they's all got what they call a collection, just the same as collectin' stamps and money and stuff like that and they got all kinds of garnet and there's everythin' in here you can think of in rocks. It's the most famous mine there is. Oh, my God, it's well advertised. Hell, ya. There's 40 different books on it, everywhere.

"In 1927, there weren't hardly any people comin' in here. Just maybe, why, maybe on a weekend, there may be two or three come in here, that's all. But now, you take through the week there's probably — it varies of course, according to who they are and where they come, but, some weeks, I'm gonna say some weeks there's probably 50 different people in here... going into the cave and diggin' over there at the dump with shovels. Pay me \$2 to come in and take anything they want... they do a lot of diggin' with chisels. Chisel the beryl out of the ledge, see. There's a lot of beryl stickin' out of the ledge all around, everywhere.

"The most I ever took in here last summer, let's see, one day I think I took in \$88. But, see, that's sellin' rocks and everythin'. But, then, I have a couple of men here that I have to pay out of it, see, my grandson, you might say, and, oh, I have a policeman out of

Portland that comes up here weekends and helps me.

"Back in 1927, I was working then for Bumpus. We done it all by hand at the time. Oh, we drilled it by hand and, take a hand drill, ya know, and hold it and a man held a hammer and dynamite and fuse. Now, doncha see, they have machinery — air compressors to drill it with and a battery to set off probably 25 sticks of dynamite, where we only set out one at a time.

"In the beginnin' all we really took out of the mill was feldspar... feldspar's used for 40 different things. They grind it up and, what I mean is, mix it with paste and put it onto buildings and everythin'. They use it for an awful lot of things.

"Then we commenced to save the mica, then we saved the quartz. The mica — I started in by hand, and just as soon as I got able enough, I bought a truck and I had four trucks hauling out of here and hauled to the mill in Keene, New Hampshire, see. And the quartz I loaded onto cars at Bethel, see, the box cars...

"The Bell Company, see, done the mining here before Rupert Aldrich took it over and they went through insolvency, see. They lost. They took in a big thing here up there where they dug that big hole. When Rupert took it over — he took over probably a dozen different mines they owned and the mill down there in West Paris and everythin'. So, he took over everythin' and knowin' me and that I owned two sides of this land — I owned it, good God, let's see, I owned on three sides — and so he called me right up and I went down and he let me have this mine to take care of. I made it right out in my deed, he's got the — what do you call it — he's got the minin' rights to come in here anytime he wanted to and pay me so much a ton.

"Now I run it for the rock hounds and still I let it out, leasing it out to people to come in here and mine it. They may come in here any day now and mine all winter. Take it down to the mill down to West Paris, ayah, and pay me so much a ton for it... I don't have to touch it. Let them do the work and I don't have no headache. In the summer time, though, I'd rather not have them in here, because I want the rock hounds in here in the summer. See, you can't have em in blowin' where they're workin'.

...cont. page 28

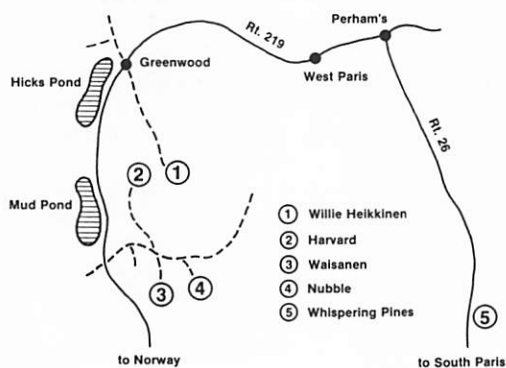
# Inroads

The Oxford Hills abound with all but abandoned gem and mineral mines. Fall is a particularly good time to take a mining excursion since the bothersome summer bugs have subsided. Because digging is done either inside caves or at dumps left behind by commercial mining operations, frozen ground ought not to be a problem clear through the month of November.

No fewer than five store-owned quarries are located within an easy drive from Perham's Maine Mineral Store, West Paris' world-renowned mecca for rock hounds. Perham's quarries are surrounded by half a dozen other privately-owned mines which may also be entered with owners' permission. All of the Perham mines are open to the public without charge because, according to Jane Perham Stevens, the store believes "there ought to be some things left in this world that can be enjoyed for free." Visitors are allowed to take out whatever they unearth.

"If they can carry it out, they can have it," said a clerk at Perham's, where many local specimens are on display in a showroom and shadowboxes are used to display especially splendid finds.

Tourmalines, amethysts and rose and smoky quartz are among the most common local discoveries.



Perham mines include (see map):

*The Willie Heikkinen Quarry*, rich in fluorescent hyalite and autunite, and ideal for night collecting. It has produced muscovite, pyrite, beryl, quartz, herderite, columbite, dendritic uraninite, amethyst and feldspar.

*The Harvard Quarry*, operated in 1917 by Harvard University. The quarry is noted for purple apatite, green tourmaline, black tourmaline, garnet, beryl, quartz and cookeite.

*The Waisanen Quarry*, well-known for its fine smoky quartz crystals and rare beryllium materials and also mined sporadically for feldspar.

*The Nubble Quarry*, source of some of the choicest mica ever discovered in New England. Other minerals found here are star white and rose quartz, green apatite, chrysoberyl, beryllonite, garnet and other feldspar associates.

*The Whispering Pines Quarry*, tagged by Perham's as an ideal place to teach youngsters about minerals because of its accessibility and the wide range of minerals it contains. The area, best known for the gem quartz it has produced, also contains black tourmaline, mica and garnet.

Perham's personnel suggest a stop at the shop for anyone en route to an area who would like additional information on either a particular quarry or gems and minerals in general. While you're there, it might not be a bad idea to pick up some reference material on Oxford County mining to keep you company before the fire during the winter nights ahead.

In all, Oxford County contains 300 varieties of the world's minerals, making it a particularly rich exploring ground. Close to 10,000 people come into the county each year on rock excursions. It's time local folks got in on the action.



*Sara Jane Elliot, Decorator*

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## Goings On...

### ETC.

**REFLECTIONS ON LIFE AFTER LIFE:** A lecture by Dr. Raymond Moody, author of "Life After Life", and workshop sponsored by Stephens Memorial Hospital and Tri-County Mental Health Services, Sat., Nov. 5 at Oxford Hills High School, South Paris, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. To register contact Thomas M. Richard, First Congregational Church, South Paris, tel. 743-2437.

**MAINE POETS CONTEST:** sponsored in conjunction with Maine Poetry Week (Oct. 15 - 22). Any poet in the state may submit a poem, which must be less than 20 lines long and may be written in any form. Entries should be mailed to: Rosemary Trott, Blueberry Hill, Freeport and should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. They must be received by Nov. 10. Winners will be announced Nov. 15. First prize is a \$25 Savings Bond.

**22nd ANNUAL CHARITY HARVEST BALL:** sponsored by the Stephens Memorial Hospital Auxiliary, Nov. 19, 9 p.m. - 1 a.m., Norway Armory. Featuring dancing to Aisha, and drawing for oil painting donated by South Paris artist, Lajos Matolcsy. Donations \$15/couple. For reservations, contact Mrs. William Medd, Lincoln Street, Paris Hill, tel. 743-2706.

**BitterSweet** welcomes announcements of area goings-on. Please submit material by the tenth of each month preceding publication.

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# Heading Out



**Tom Goodman: Marketing a good time**

It can pay you to take in a movie at The Magic Lantern on Rt. 302 in Bridgton. If you throw on your Magic Lantern sweat shirt over your Magic Lantern tee shirt, crawl up to the box office on your knees with ten people behind you and flash the discount pass you picked up the night before at the concession stand, you'll make a dollar on the deal.

The gimmickry is part of some ingenious promotion engineered by theatre owner and manager Tom Goodman, a young, bearded, energetic entrepreneur whose never-say-die attitude ought to win him an Oscar. At a time when *New York Times* movie critics are lamenting the demise of the neighborhood movie house, Goodman has set out to revamp and revive the old Brookside theatre, which has lain nearly dormant in Bridgton in recent years. The building's exterior sports a handsome hand-carved marquee. Its interior is classy and comfortable. At the concession stand you can buy hot coffee, homemade cookies and granola bars.

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# Buckfield Leather 'n Lather

## Traveling Variety Show:

### *Searching for Self-Sufficiency*

If Benny and Denise Reehl could sell their organic soap and handmade leather goods as naturally as they sell themselves, they'd really have their act together.

The Reehls have spent the last few months traveling the northeast as two of a three-member troupe with Buckfield Leather 'n Lather Traveling Variety Show, winning audiences over from Rochester, N.Y. to Fryeburg, Maine with their offbeat brand of humor, juggling, mime and music. The trek is a kind of test flight for the Reehls, on their way toward discovering whether revival of the old-time medicine and soap shows could be today's answer for a self-sufficient, independent art form.



"I've been the grant funding route before and I want to avoid it at all costs," says Benny, who served as business manager for the Celebration Mime Theatre in South Paris, which has been endowed by various federal and private grants for the arts.

From a stage set up at the rear of a renovated 1928 Reo Speed Wagon, the Reehls and partner Gretchen Berg, a former school teacher and Celebration student, attempt to barter "a vast congress of bewitching novelties" in return for the purchase of their leather goods, crafted at their North Buckfield shop, and packets of Tom's Natural Soap, manufactured in Kennebunk. In theory, the money made through sales should be enough to keep the show on the road. In fact, that hasn't happened.

In the original traveling medicine and soap shows which toured the United States from 1850 through the 1920s, there were both performers — like Princess Lotus Blossom and The Mighty Atom — to provide entertainment, and pitchmen — like Silk Hat Harry and Doctor Painless Parker — to cash

in on the acts through sales of everything from Kickapoo Indian Sagwa to Wa-Hoo Bitters. In the case of the Buckfield show, however, members of the troupe are both performers and pitchmen. And therein lies the rub.

Part of the reason for lagging sales early on in the season rested with performer's natural reluctance toward high-pressure salesmanship.

"In the beginning, we were almost embarrassed to try to sell our things," recalls Denise, who gave up touring with Celebration in order to devote all her time to the variety show. "We believed that the hardsell was offensive."

The problem was eventually taken care of by developing a character to go out on stage and hawk the wares, unabashedly and entertainingly. When the show appeared in Buckfield over Labor Day, for instance, and Benny spotted local market worker Virgil

## Making It

Tilton in attendance, he incorporated Tilton's name into his come-on for a handsome, sheepskin vest. The technique got a few laughs and may have helped make some sales.



**Benny & Denise Reehl at the Fryeburg Fair:**  
Today's answer for a self-sufficient art form?

The players have made a conscious effort to steer clear of the huckster image which has grown around the original traveling pitchmen.

...cont. page 38





## BESSEY MOTOR SALES

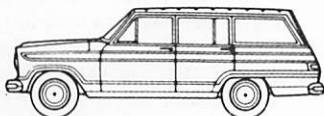


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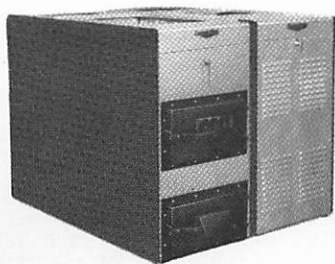


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# Sweet Finds

Anyone about to attempt more than a hit-or-miss try at buttoning up his or her home for the winter ought to get ahold of a manual published by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development entitled, "In The Bank... Or Up The Chimney?" The seventy-page pamphlet is the most comprehensive, down-to-earth of its type we've ever laid eyes on. It presents a systematic, five-step approach toward staving off the winter cold, along with simple dollars and cents estimates of what each method will mean in money spent and saved.

For instance, turning down the thermostat six degrees won't cost a thing but will result in a \$10 to \$40 per year cash savings, according to the booklet. Putting up plastic storm windows will cost between \$5 and \$7 the first year; savings will run between \$15 and \$45 annually. Servicing an oil furnace should cost about \$25; it will save \$15 to \$40 each year in operational expenses. Caulking and weather-stripping will run about \$75 to \$105, if you do them yourself; you'll save between \$30 and \$75 per year. Do-it-yourself attic insulating should cost between \$160 and \$290; it ought to cut between \$35 and \$120 per year off your fuel bill.

The booklet recommends that everyone turn down the thermostats, put up storm windows and service furnaces regularly. Whether or not weatherstripping, caulking, attic and other insulation is necessary depends on the house. Nearly half the manual is devoted to the topic of insulation, with instructions on how to tell if it is needed, how much of what type is called for and how to go about either getting it installed or installing it yourself. The booklet cautions against automatic installation, advising that blown-in wall insulation, for instance, ought to be purchased only as a last resort because it is the least cost-efficient of all buttoning-up procedures.

Far more important, says the booklet, are caulking, weatherstripping and storm windows — all things which can be done with little cost and effort. Simply plugging leaks around windows and doors will save more energy than almost anything else you can do.

*The booklet can be obtained from the Maine Office of Energy Resources for 55 cents or from the U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for \$1.70.*

Discarded table legs, dowels, and other scraps from Cornwall Industries' wood turning operation make great kindling. The wood, packages in 100 pound grain sacks, is on sale for 50 cents a bag from the Cornwall mill on Marston Street, Norway. It can be picked up anytime during regular business hours.




## WANTED:

Beginning next month, **BitterSweet** will regularly publish feature-length letters submitted by readers and devoted to individual topics of interest ranging from snowmobiles to shopping centers, bird hunting to cross country skiing. We know there are a lot of people around with some strong opinions and the wherewithall to put those thoughts into words. We're hoping that setting aside a few pages each month will serve as the needed incentive to take pen in hand. Letters should run about 600 words. Address them to:

## **BitterSweet**


One Madison Avenue, Oxford, Me. 04270

# PUBLIC NOTICE

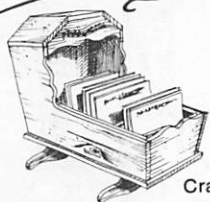
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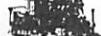
Bath Accessories from our  
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\*See our 25% Off Offer on the coupon elsewhere in this issue of Bittersweet.

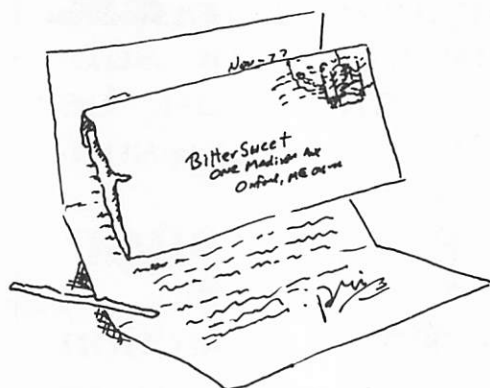
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# Ayah

We consider your comments and suggestions an important means of discovering our readers' interests. Representative and appropriate letters will be published as space allows. Most likely answers won't be necessary, and probably the only response you'll receive will be a most appropriate "Ayah!"



Wish You Were Here!

## You Don't Say

Cattleman Bill ("Try Beef Every Day") Kimball of Waterford is a veritable font of homespun philosophy, a master of the quotable quote. The homilies pour forth as fast as Mutiny Brook surges during spring run-off. While watching Kimball masterfully carve up my beef critter one morning recently, I was treated to some samples:

"It's a strange road that has no turn."

"Be careful as you agree but **do** as you agree."

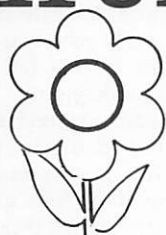
"You're born with the best education you'll ever have — the common sense that God gave you."

Ayah.





# NATURAL



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## Recollections...

"...There's a lot of stuff still comin' out of here. It's an active mine and it's gonna be forever. I'm doin' it a little and they're doin' it too, see. Anybody who wants to come down here can, same as that fellow who's comin' back here Thanksgiving, wants a whole truck load of rose quartz. He wants five tons, sure. He's not goin' to put that in his collection. He's gonna build something. I don't ask 'em. Oh, he's gonna pay me so much a ton and got to pick it up himself.

"Really, I done very little (mining) myself. I never was really too interested in it myself because I was born and brought up right here in the rocks... I just do it, you might say, for a hobby. I retired back, oh, my God, when was it, about 15 years ago — somethin' like that, see. I'll be 70 my next birthday, what do you think of that? I keep a-goin' — that's what everyone says *keeps* me goin'.



... and with his partridge prey

"I'm gonna mine out now some rose quartz to get that fella, see. But, I don't want narithin' to do with it. You can see I'd have to hire help. I don't want that. Used to. I'm out of it now, doncha see, no bookkeeping, no headaches, no anythin'. I take care of myself, that's all. That's right. Sure."

## Heading Out...

Movies shown at the Magic Lantern run the gamut from the classics to Walt Disney. All are accompanied by cartoons and, sometimes, a short subject. During November, you'll see *One On One*, *Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo*, *Rocky* and, probably, *Star Wars*. Special screenings are available every Friday, and birthday celebrations, complete with lolly pops for the kiddies, may be arranged on at least five minutes' notice.

"We're in the business of marketing a good time," says Goodman, who worked several years as a Boston projectionist before taking over the theatre last spring.

What he hadn't counted on, however, was how hard it would be to get folks back into the habit of frequenting the town theatre. After a moderately successful summer, an early fall slump — brought on, in part, by the new fall television season — has him biting the bullet. He's cut his staff back to almost nothing in order to keep costs at an absolute minimum. But, he's determined to dig in his heels to tackle a traditionally bleak winter season.

"I know that if I can just hang on until this time next year, I'll be okay," says Goodman.

The key to success, he believes, lies in flexibility for the theatre. He is anxious to see the building used for more than just movies. The community theatre group may stage productions. The hall has been made available for public meetings. The place has already seen performances by a harpist — between Marx Brothers movies — and a handful of puppets.

Goodman is convinced his determination will pay off. Growth of suburban movie houses, which have taken such a toll on small town theatre enterprises, has run its course, he says.

"We're ready to give people anything they want here," promises Goodman.

Take a look at what the Magic Lantern has to offer. If you don't see anything that suits you, then ask for it.

Admission to shows is \$2 for adults, \$1 for kids and senior citizens, with show time scheduled for 7:30 p.m., along with regular matinees.

For information, telephone 647-5033.

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## Folk Tales

Eighty-two-year-old Augusta Eastman of East Sumner could have been her own best customer. The retired postmaster has mailed more than 900 pieces of mail so far this year and is confident she'll top the 1000 mark with upcoming Christmas correspondence.

"It helps keep me busy," she says.



Miss Eastman retired as the East Sumner postmaster in 1965, after 45 years of service. When she stepped into the job in 1919, she was one of the youngest in the nation to hold the position and the first female to manage the East Sumner office. The post office closed on December 31, 1973 as part of the postal department's consolidation trend and the building is being converted into a private residence by Miss Eastman's grand niece and her husband. Although Miss Eastman can vouch for continued good postal service since the closing, the record has not been perfect. A birthday package mailed to her nephew in Connecticut last July has yet to arrive at its destination. But, based on the law of averages, one out of 900 isn't bad. •

**BitterSweet** welcomes brief news items on neighbors-of-note from readers. Material should be sent to **BitterSweet**, One Madison Avenue, Oxford, Maine 04270.



## Barbershop...

1950's international champions).

A code of ethics limits membership to "congenial men of good character who love harmony in music and desire to harmonize." The code also stipulates that no music be forced upon "unsympathetic ears."

So far, the local chapter has found audiences anything but unsympathetic. Some of the love songs and tear jerkers may have lyrics bordering on the melodramatic. But, as the group's youngest member, Mike Swann of Norway, points out, it is the *sound*, not the words which wins audiences over.

"When my high school friends hear the group, it's the sound that turns them on," says Swann, who has sung with high school groups as well as the Norway-South Paris Choraliers. "They realize how hard it is to do and they're impressed."

The hair-raising results of a well run chord are not the sole province of the barbershop singers. Audiences, too, can experience those same chills.

"In this sophisticated world, how many times can you get that kind of honest, emotional response to anything," asks Gouin, "There's nothing like it in the world."

Members of the chapter and its talented director, S.A.D. 17 elementary school teacher Henry St. Pierre, admit they are a little astounded at the group's rapid rise. When the chorus entered regional competition just a few months after organizing last year, it placed fifth out of eight chapters in the sound category — a respectable finish for groups of much longer standing. People hearing the chorus for the first time at a sing-out are amazed at its range, routines, and professionalism.

The secret to success appears to lie more in approach than in art. ...cont. page 34

Woodshedding in the kitchen: visitor Jim Dunn, Art Gouin, Bill Detert and Bob Ross.



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# Homemade

November is a month of harvest suppers, hunters' feeds and, of course, Thanksgiving dinners. There's nothing better than a special salad to liven up a group feast. And nothing is more versatile than the jello salad.

A favorite of the group of Bridgton area residents over 55 who gather the second and fourth Thursday of each month at the Methodist Church in Bridgton, is *Winona's Raspberry Salad*. Bonnie Whitney, manager of the People's Regional Opportunity Program (PROP), which sponsors the meals, takes her "tried and true" recipe from *The Crowd Pleaser's Cookbook*, compiled by Arlene Bryant especially for the program.

"The salad sounds terrible, but it's delicious," reports Mrs. Whitney, calling the splash of color which the dish lends a table, "an additional bonus."

The recipe is a good way to put some of that freshly-canned applesauce to use. It is suitable for preparing in large batches to serve at upcoming holiday suppers or club feeds. Or, it may be scaled down to family-size portions.

## Winona's Raspberry Salad

### GROUP SERVING

- 1 - number 10 can of applesauce  
(or comparable home-canned portion)
- 1 lb. 8 oz. Raspberry flavored Jello
- 1 - number 10 can pineapple, drained
- 2 - 2/3 cups orange juice
- 1 1/2 quarts 7-Up

Heat the applesauce until it bubbles. Remove from heat and add the DRY Jello. Mix until dissolved. Add the other ingredients. Mix and chill.

### FAMILY SERVING

- 1 cup applesauce
- 1 - 3 oz. package raspberry flavored Jello
- 1 - 8 oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1 - 7 oz. bottle 7-Up

Follow same procedure as in group serving preparation.



Bonnie Whitney



Dorothy Walker of Bethel gets two courses for the price of one from her Jello-based recipe, which makes up into a tasty dessert and a salad on the side. Called *Strawberry Angel Dessert*, the dish is a favorite for group gatherings, she says.



**Dorothy Walker**

"I started using it with the Church Circle and I've been using it ever since," says Mrs. Walker, who, along with her husband Joe, manages Sudbury Village Apartments.

The salad/dessert will serve about 15, is quick to prepare and dirties only three bowls — all features which ought to win it top billing in anybody's cookbook.

#### **Strawberry Angel Dessert**

- 1 large angel cake
- 6 oz. package of strawberry Jello
- 2 cups of boiling water
- 1 pint whipped cream
- 1 lb. box frozen strawberries (thawed)

Hollow out the angel cake, leaving about half an inch of cake along the edges. Break the hollowed-out portion of the cake into small pieces in a large bowl. In another bowl, mix the Jello with 2 cups of boiling water. Set aside to thicken (about an hour). Whip one pint of cream and combine with 1 lb. box of thawed frozen strawberries and broken pieces of angel cake. Pour jello into mixture. Then fill the cake with the Jello, cream, strawberries and crumbs. Pour what is left over into a small cake pan. Chill both dishes overnight. Top cake with whipped cream and strawberries before serving as dessert.

Serve salad as is. •

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### Barbershop...

"It's 90% attitude and 10% skill," suggests Gouin. "Someone — I think it was the teacher at our Harmony Workshop — asked, 'How much of yourself are you willing to put into a song?' Perhaps the answer to that is directly related to the kind of performance you wind up giving."

Because the group performs so well, it is its own best advertisement.

"If people are a little interested in joining, they come to hear us, like what they hear and wind up signing up," says Swann.



Joe Rodriguez



Mike Swann

St. Pierre says he recognized from the start that, because of the commitment, "the potential was there."

"But, I thought we would have to work longer to get this good," he confides.

St. Pierre credits an abundance of local men with a love of singing, and a similar number of willing hard workers for the group's rapid climb.

The coordinator of countless church choirs and a well-versed musician in his own right, St. Pierre had never even been present at a barbershop concert before taking over as the group's conductor at Christmas time last year. Although he had never before dealt with the close harmony intrinsic to the form, he has schooled himself hard in techniques of voicing, phrasing, arranging and interpretation, with help from Portland chapter members and regional associates.

He's a natural for the job — at one moment during rehearsal admonishing his basses to "think of the words;" at another, spurring on the chorus with an "oh, yeh, can you feel it?" Spinning, strutting, complimenting, coaxing — his face is as expressive and malleable as the oldtime children's Changeable Charlie puzzle, in an effort to elicit the desired emotional response from his performers.

"I like to really get involved in what I'm doing," he smiles, a master of the understatement.



Henry St. Pierre: "The potential was there."

But, St. Pierre is also the first to admit that, despite its rags-to-riches beginning, the group has a lot of ground left to cover. A recent workshop sponsored by the region stressed techniques for feeling and expressing pieces and has resulted in what he views as "a whole new sound" for the chorus. Weekly meetings continually stress development of better breathing, balancing and blending. The start of each practice now also features exercises "ooohing" and "aahing," designed to draw the group together both musically and emotionally.

St. Pierre says he'd like to see another 20 members added to the chorus and more quartets pieced together. The group as a whole needs help with staging, he says, and must eventually develop its own special style and sound.

Along the way, some decisions will have to be made about where to draw the line between having good fun and competing in earnest. There are some spots in the country where barbershopping is big business; where fulltime stage directors and arrangers are hired at high salaries to school people who live and breathe harmony.

"Right now, part of the reason we're having such a good time may be that we're free of the tension of competition," says St. Pierre.

But, neither he nor other members of the group believe the group's increased proficiency will be at the expense of good times.

After almost 20 years in barbershopping, Stan Andrews gets steamed up when he talks about the relatively new appearance of razzle-dazzle outfits and showy stage props as part of regional, district and national competitions each year.

"That kind of stuff has no place with a good ringing chord," he grimaces.



### Barbershop...

Bill Detert, who's also sung his share of barbershop, says the tendency to take competition too seriously is not inevitable.

"Each chapter has a personality of its own," explains Detert, who says he personally would prefer "woodshedding" (informal, spontaneous harmonizing) "out behind the barn" to stage performing, any day.

"Some chapters thrive on competition and think it's dull when they're only singing for the Ladies Circle," he says. "Others say if you work too hard you're taking the fun out of it."

Detert says he doesn't think it's likely that the local group will sacrifice fun for fame. For one thing, the group's rural location presents geographical problems, particularly in terms of travel to and from competitions. It is no coincidence, he says, that most big barbershop competitors hail from urban areas.

"First rate fellowship and first rate music — those are two priorities which I don't think we'll ever lose sight of," predicts Detert, whose Illinois group had what he terms "a total commitment to winning."

The two were certainly working hand-in-hand during a recent rehearsal attended, unexpectedly, by a Manchester, Connecticut barbershopper who was touring the area with his wife on a 36th wedding anniversary celebration. The couple had arranged to stay a night in Norway specifically in order to attend the get-together. The 16-year veteran harmonizer had barely sauntered into the church basement before he was belting out barber pole cat songs — those numbers common to all chapters — along with the chorus; woodshedding in the corner of the kitchen during the break; and later tackling tags — the dramatic sequences which draw songs to their spine-tingling conclusion — as part of a tiny tenor section.

"This is one of the brightest moments of our fall foliage tour," smiled his wife from a seat on the sidelines.

For anyone within earshot, her words rang true. •



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### **Marriage...**

"Don't you think Polly's mother could stop talking?"

George chuckled, "Do you think this one year we'll keep the heifers out of that corn?"

"Are you making a comparison?"

Now he laughed, "No." He drew out the sound. It was one of the cool nights of July and damp enough that for a moment he was ready to believe he saw his own breath. He scanned and appreciated again and again the take and growth of the corn-field. Below, the plantings had been a little too cold and wet.

At the top they turned out onto the edge of the hayfield and reined the horses around beside a rock pile where sumac had found some way of growing. From this vantage, Black Mountain had a bulk and rise that it lacked from the windows of their house. She looked at it for moments, as she had looked at the orchards fifteen minutes before — the moonlight seemed to invite a re-vision of familiar views — and she liked its uneven sprawl better than the grid of apple trees strung out like beads. The she looked at George and saw him smiling. You could be mad as hell and he'd still grin.

"What's that smile for, mister?" She heard her tone and might have wished to polish away the rougher edges.

"Well, he said slowly on a column of out-passing breath, "I was thinking..."

"What?" She didn't trust his manner. There were times when he wouldn't take seriously a single, solitary thing, and he was as likely to tell her green and yellow elephants as anything real.

"I'm not sure I should say ah-yes-or-boo."

"If you think you can tease me..."

"Easy now," he said to her and her horse both. He slapped pockets for his pipe but he'd left it on the porch rail or the kitchen table.

"I was on my way back from town. Bill was up here mending fence, and I saw his pickup, and stopped out on the road and walked in to see how he was doing." He paused until he identified the sound below as a neighbor's coonhound, barking probably without cause.

"Well, there was his truck, and you know how the ground falls off over there where the spring brook comes through." He indicated the place without pointing — more

...cont. page 37

## Marriage...

or less using a combination of head and hand, "When I didn't see Bill, I went and looked and found him and Polly."

"George." Abrupt as the call of a woodcock. "You didn't."

"Did."

"Polly and Billy," her voice contained conflicting tones. Then she began to laugh. "But how? He must have lit off in the truck while you were away and gone and got her and brought her back there..." She laughed more, and their knees nearly touched as the horses stood almost as closely as they did in their box stall. Impulsively, she reached across to lay a hand on his upper arm. "They didn't see you, did they?"

"No," he answered and she laughed.

They descended slowly to the stable, unsaddled, wiped down the dew-wet horses and hung the tack. The leghorns woke and blinked in the light of the bare bulb, which turned outdoors into true night, not the half-night of the moon. She yawned and, in a moment of childishness, lurched up against his chest and belly and leaned there.

"Come on."

The downstairs were brightly lit though empty and he experienced a moment when he felt they were coming here, home, for the first time, to a house someone thoughtfully had left lighted. He was amused. On the rail he found his pipe, filled and lit it, while she dropped onto the chaise lounge and the springs adjusted.

"Why didn't you say so before?"

He grunted. He tried to form a coal by sucking short puffs. "If they hadn't gotten engaged, well, sometime... uh."

Without seeing it, she knew he shrugged. She laughed softly, on a mood that could turn up or down, westerly or to the east. "We did too," she said. In a moment she added, "I don't know why I laughed." Then her mind took another step. "Did you cart me all the way up there to tell me?"

"No. Hell, no. It never occurred to me until we got there."

"You damned fool," she said.

A Bowdoin graduate, Meader has worked as a lobsterman and social service planner and is now farming in Buckfield.

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## **Making It...**

"People's association with medicine show pitchmen has been mostly negative," says Benny, explaining that the show has refused appearances at county fair midways in order to combat the con man connotations. "They have always thought of pitchmen as con artists rather than legitimate salesmen."

Benny concentrates instead on portraying the more honorable Yankee peddlars of the past, who carted dry goods and sundries door-to-door and whose visits were anticipated and appreciated.

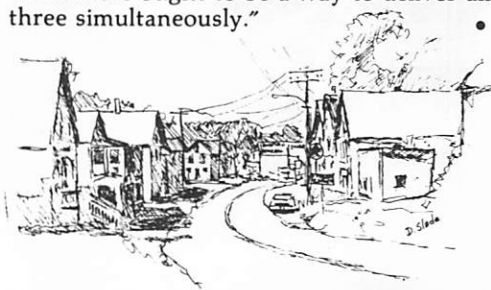
"Once we began to be more direct about our products, sales increased unbelievably," he says.

To boost them even further, the Reehls are working on ways to make products more accessible following a show, when people file front to the stage to consider purchases. And, they're developing what Benny calls some leather "doo-dads" — items which will sell for under \$10 — to help add coins to the coffers.

But, even with increased soap and leather sales, the Reehls say the show could not pay its way without charging sponsorship fees for each performance and without some kind of additional subsidy. The fees usually run in the \$250/day range and are comparable to those charged by other touring groups. The subsidy route is something that will be explored this winter, while the show is sidelined. Benny says he thinks the answer lies in recruiting some big time business to serve as a sort of patron of the arts. The arrangement would be preferable to grant funding, he says, and something he believes a national firm would buy.

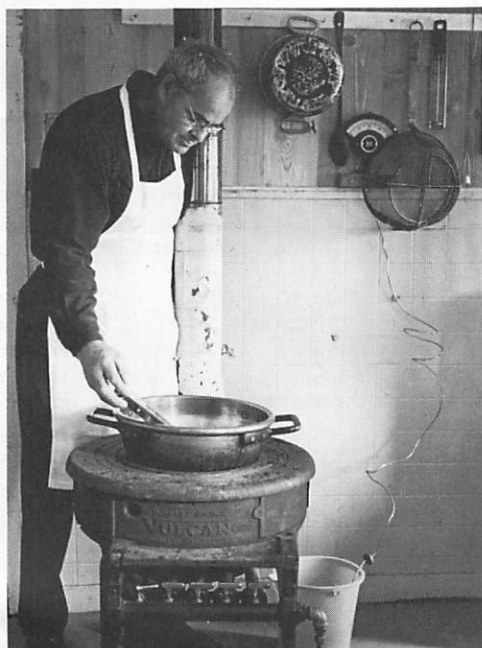
"It would be a great way for business to support the arts in a direct way," he says. "What better promotion could a business have?"

"We think there's a need for good products in all areas today — entertainment and leather and soap products, too," says Reehl. "And there ought to be a way to deliver all three simultaneously."





## Maine Cottage...



**Candyman Don Miller: He's seen what a craft can mean.**

Glueck, who is also an accomplished woodworker and gardener, says he invests up to 10 hours in a single lamp and hardly gets paid anything for his labor once the item is put on sale at the Cottage at a price around \$50.

"But, labor is time and I have lots of that," he shrugs.

**Harry Glueck at work on a Tiffany-style lamp: "No push, no pressure."**

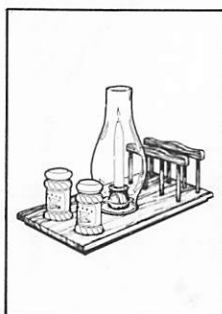


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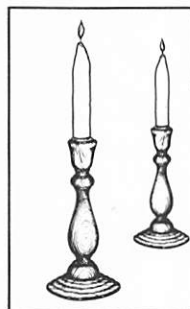
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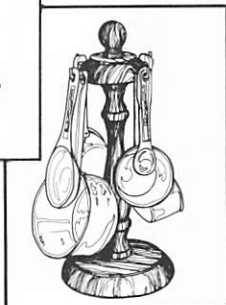
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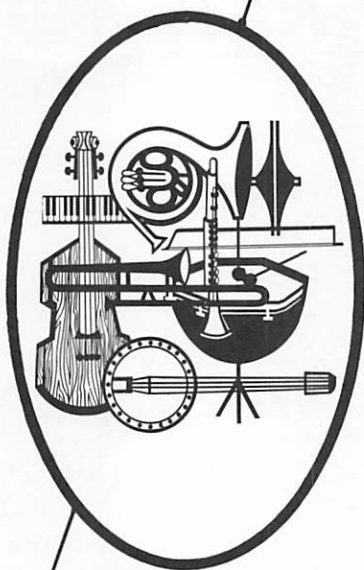
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**Maine Cottage...**



**Viva Whitman warms by Cottage fire.**

"Besides, I'm so pleased to see anything that looks this pretty when finished," he admits, admiring a handsome holiday wreath, "It's a real accomplishment. Some people might even call it a work of art."

Both Mrs. Brown and Glueck rely on the Maine Cottage almost exclusively to market their wares so it isn't surprising then that, even though the income isn't essential, they would miss the place were it to disappear. But, crafts is big business for a candy-maker in Bridgton and a metal sculptor in Harrison. Loss of the Maine Cottage wouldn't hurt them a hoot. But both say they'd be just as sorry as the hobbyists to see the place shut down.



**Barbara Brown's dried arrangements.**

Don Miller's homemade candy is so good it's the only kind the Cottage carries. His fudge, bark, needhams, caramels, lolly pops

...cont. page 41

## Maine Cottage...

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**Barbara Brown with her fringed throws: "I need that incentive."**

#### **Maine Cottage...**

something that you have yourself. We could have had a factory and a half. But, we have chosen to do what we can do and let the rest rip," says Mrs. Miller.

The Millers are proud of the fact that they are one of only a few truly homemade candy enterprises left in the state. They use no machines, no prepared mixes, no artificial anything.

Their appreciation for fine workmanship

in the candy making field carries over to feelings for places like the Maine Cottage.

"We've watched crafts mushroom during the 25 years we've been in business," observes Mrs. Miller, "We'd hate to see that trend reversed."

After all, she adds, she and her husband have seen first-hand what a craft, cleverly and carefully pursued, can mean to a family.

#### **Old Someday**

So has metal sculptor Arthur Ward of Harrison, who four years ago became fed up with the hassles of his carpenter profession and gave it all up for fulltime sculpting. He says the freedom of his new-found profession is worth the hard work involved in getting him to the point where, with a good Christmas sales season this year, he'll "be able to see daylight at last."

Ward's nuts and bolts miniatures on display at the Maine Cottage have won him the nickname "nut man." The clever, humorous figures, which he calls "silly stuff," are offshoots of his serious art — free-form metal sculpture. From brass, copper and steel sheets, Ward creates unique, impressive wall hangings and freestanding articles which are anything but silly. He markets his work mostly at the three dozen crafts shows he attends along the east coast each year.

The Maine Cottage is the first gift shop where he took his work once he began in earnest. It is the only place where he still bothers to leave things.

"Other shops will rob you blind and just aren't worth the trouble," says Ward, outspoken and affable.

But, the Maine Cottage, he says, is easy to work with.

"That place does a lot of good for a lot of people," says Ward. "Look, I may not rely on it now. But, I'm going to be old someday. I might need it then."

At a meeting of producers called in Norway to discuss the Maine Cottage's fate, Ward and others showed sufficient interest to move Mrs. Whitney to vow to keep the doors open through Christmas "by hook or by crook." But, even with a successful Christmas season, this year's proceeds are

...cont. page 43

### Maine Cottage...

bound to be below normal due to the move, which cost dearly in summer tourist trade. And, with every year that passes, the business digs deeper into the cash reserve supplied by initial funding grants from the Extension, County Commissioners and Catholic Bishop's Fund. Even an average 35 per cent commission doesn't generate enough income to offset \$13,000 worth of annual expenses.

Members of the Cottage's Board of Directors have always been hesitant to go begging for money from local businesses and civic groups. They remain as determined as ever to avoid the red tape which accompanies grant funding.

Mrs. DeCoteau says she's ready to admit that the place will probably never be able to support itself, as originally hoped. But, she says that so long as there is proof that the Maine Cottage is doing the rest of what it set out to do — by providing an outlet for homemade crafts which would otherwise go unsold — it's worth the strain of trying to scrape the business by year to year.

"The board has voted to stay open through Christmas and will try heating the place with wood and oil stoves. Producers have convinced us to go ahead and try it. Now, I guess it's time to take our case to the public and see what they say," suggests Mrs. DeCoteau.

Local support has long been a bone of contention at the Cottage, since the bulk of sales comes not from local clientele, but from the summer tourist trade. Many locals argue that things are too expensive at the shop — a feeling which is hotly refuted by Cottage workers. But, regardless of pricing, there is no getting around the fact that the Maine Cottage, like all gift shops, is a luxury business. None of its assorted knit sweaters, stuffed animals, silver jewelry or ceramic mugs is an essential item.

"There is nothing here you can't do without," concedes Mrs. Whitney. "A tight economy is bound to take its toll."

On the other hand, she says, if people are going to buy a gift anyway, they can find something priced just as reasonably at the Cottage as anywhere else in town.

Producers have convinced Maine Cottage management that they feel a need for the shop — that the place has fulfilled its

promise as a creative outlet if not an economic cure-all. What remains to be seen is whether or not the public as a whole shares producers' enthusiasm.

"We're gambling that enough money will come in from Christmas sales to cover the cost of our bills and the installation of the stoves, with enough left over to open up again next spring," says Mrs. Whitney.

In the meantime, the board has already voted to buy her and co-worker Thelma Merrill sets of long underwear to help combat the cold in the days ahead.

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# Poetry

## Adolescence

the ice cubes  
that turned  
the water  
unbearably cold,  
melted  
&  
made my glass  
overflow.

—Dana Lowell

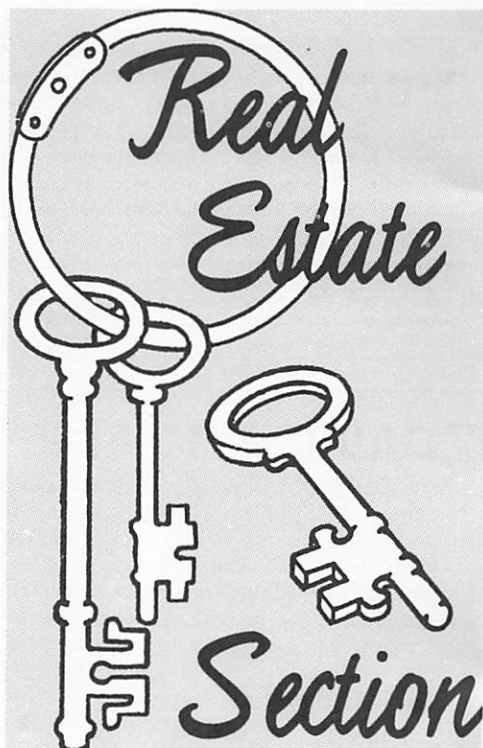


## Brothers

arms flying  
lock in mid-air,  
two bodies  
struggle  
to the snow;  
grips clearer  
than voices —  
tempers edge close.  
the height — hands loosening —  
eyes locked  
in an echoing stillness —  
a draw.

—Dana Lowell

*Son of a wood mill owner and operator, Lowell writes and works with his hands.*



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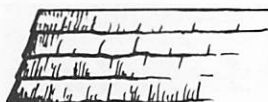
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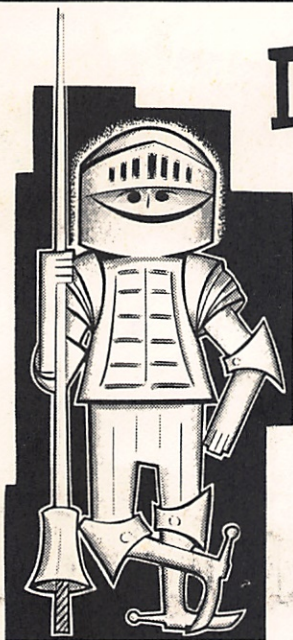
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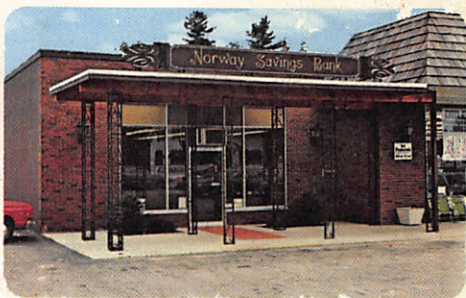
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